



**U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement**

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# News Release

## **Egyptian man pleads guilty to smuggling more than 100 individuals from the Middle East into the United States**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- An Egyptian man has pleaded guilty to smuggling nearly 100 individuals from Middle Eastern countries into the United States, Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney Kenneth L. Wainstein of the District of Columbia, and Assistant Secretary Julie L. Myers of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), announced today.

Ashraf Ahmed Abdallah Bashar, 37, entered his guilty plea today in federal court before U.S. Magistrate Judge Deborah A. Robinson. Abdallah admitted to leading a human smuggling ring that brought 100 or more persons into the United States from April 2001 through January 2002.

According to plea documents filed in court, Abdallah met with and housed these men in Guatemala City where he offered to provide illegal entry into the United States. For up to \$8,000, Abdallah arranged land transportation and guides to the United States and organized layovers at safe houses in Guatemala and Mexico. Abdallah also advised the men on how to avoid being apprehended during their journey to the United States. In the end, Abdallah and his co-conspirators successfully provided 100 or more individuals with guided foot-passage across the Southwest border into the United States.

Under the terms of the plea agreement, Abdallah could face a four-year prison sentence. His sentencing is set for October 24, 2006, before U.S. District Court Judge Ricardo M. Urbina.

"Providing persons with unknown backgrounds undetected entry into our country is a threat to national security," said Assistant Attorney General Fisher. "The Department of Justice will continue to use all legal means to stop illegal human smuggling and the serious threat it poses to American citizens."

U.S. Attorney Wainstein stated, "Protecting our borders remains one of our top priorities. We will use every tool at our disposal to break up alien smuggling rings and put the operators behind bars."

"Among the ranks of human smuggling kingpins, Abdallah was one of our major targets. The fact that he has pleaded guilty and is no longer in a position to smuggle people into this country is a significant milestone in our efforts to combat human smuggling organizations," said ICE Assistant Secretary Julie L. Myers.

Abdallah's arrest and charges against him arose from an international investigation led by the ICE field office in Washington.

The case is being prosecuted by Trial Attorney Brian Skaret of the Domestic Security Section of the Criminal Division, headed by Section Chief Teresa McHenry; and Assistant U.S. Attorneys John Crabb, Laura Ingersoll and Jonathan Malis of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*